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Pope Leo XIV seeks to reestablish ‘full visible communion’ with Eastern Orthodox



Pope Leo XIV meets with the delegation of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople on June 28, 2025, at the Vatican. | Credit: Vatican News



By Andrés Henríquez

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Ecumenical Patriarchate in a June 28 audience held at the Apostolic Palace of the Vatican in the context of the June 29 celebration of the solemnity of Sts. Peter and Paul.

The Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople is the seat of the Eastern Orthodox Church of Constantinople based in Istanbul, Turkey. The Ecumenical Patriarchate is considered “*primus inter pares*” (“first among equals”) among the patriarchs of the other churches of the Eastern Orthodox communion.

The delegation was headed by Metropolitan Emmanuel of Chalcedon, president of the Synodal Commission of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for Relations with the Catholic Church, accompanied by the Most Reverend Fathers Aetios and Ieronymos.

Bartholomew has been the current archbishop of Constantinople and ecumenical patriarch since Nov. 2, 1991. Traditionally, a delegation from the Ecumenical Patriarchate visits the Vatican on the occasion of the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul.

Similarly, a Vatican delegation usually visits Istanbul, the capital of present-day Turkey, every Nov. 30 on the occasion of the celebration of the feast day of St. Andrew, the Ecumenical Patriarchate’s patron saint.

Goal of full visible communion between the two Churches

The Catholic Encyclopedia explains that in 1054, “the most deplorable quarrel,” known as the **Eastern Schism**, occurred, separating the vast majority of Eastern Christians from communion with the Catholic Church, thus giving rise to the Orthodox Church.

Leo XIV stated that his intention is to “persevere in the effort to reestablish full visible communion between our Churches,” a goal that, he said, can only be achieved “with God’s help, through a continued commitment to respectful listening and fraternal dialogue.”

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of the Church,” the Holy Father said during the **June 28 audience**.

He also recalled that “after centuries of disagreements and misunderstanding,” authentic dialogue between the two Churches was only possible thanks to “the courageous and farsighted steps taken by Pope Paul VI and Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras.”

“Their venerable successors to the sees of Rome and Constantinople have pursued with conviction the same path of reconciliation, thus further strengthening our close relations,” the pope added.

Leo XIV highlighted the “witness of sincere closeness” that Patriarch Bartholomew has always expressed to the Catholic Church, demonstrated especially by participating in the funeral of Pope Francis and later in the inaugural Mass of the new bishop of Rome.

The Holy Father said the traditional exchange of delegations “is a sign of the profound communion already existing between us, and a reflection of the fraternal bond that united the Apostles Peter and Andrew.”

Leo XIV expressed his profound gratitude for their presence in Rome “on this solemn occasion.” He asked them to convey his cordial greetings to Patriarch Bartholomew and the members of the Holy Synod, along with his gratitude for having sent the delegation again this year.

“May Sts. Peter and Paul, St. Andrew and the holy Mother of God, who live eternally in the perfect communion of the saints, accompany and sustain us in our efforts in the service of the Gospel. Thank you!” Pope Leo said.

*This story **was first published** by ACI Prensa, CNA’s Spanish-language news partner. It has been translated and adapted by CNA.*

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